

## **Logan County Commissioners Work Session**

**August 16, 2022**

Present: Byron Pelton, Jane Bauder, Joe McBride, Alan Samber, Ashley Smith, Rhonda Chrisp, Debbie Unrein, Marilee Johnson, Sam Fry, Lee Walz, Kathy Guerin, Wade Tyrell, Glenna Phelps Aurich, Brianna McBride, Jerry Casebolt, Michelle Hoff, Jerry Sonnenberg, Jeff Rice and Jennifer Crow.

Chairman Pelton called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION** – Commissioner Bauder moved to approve the minutes of August 2, 2022 with the correction of adding Commissioner McBride as being present. Motion carried 2-0 with Chairman Pelton abstaining as he was absent.

**REVISIONS TO WORK SESSION AGENDA** – Commissioner Bauder added discussion of new servers for IT and the first preliminary drawing for the Exhibit Center Expansion Project. Chairman Pelton added Chamber of Commerce Members to the agenda after Lee Walz.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE HUMAN SERVICES SCHEDULE OF BILLS** – Ashley Smith met with the Board to review Logan County Department of Human Services schedule of bills dated August 16, 2022. The Board approved all bills as presented.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE SCHEDULE OF COUNTY BILLS** – Rhonda Chrisp met with the Board to review the Logan County schedule of bills dated August 16, 2022. The Board approved all bills as presented.

**REVIEW BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA** – The Board will remove the approval of the minutes of the minutes of the from the consent agenda as Commissioner McBride was not present for the July 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. separately from the consent agenda.

**NEW PATHWAYS TO WELLNESS AND RECOVERY** - Sam Fry of New Pathways to Wellness and Recovery met with the Board to discuss the New Pathways to Wellness and Recovery events. August 31<sup>st</sup> is Overdose Awareness Day. They are requesting that the lights on the Courthouse be purple that evening and all during September. The bigger event is to be held on September 10, in the Gazebo with musicians coming and a butterfly release in remembrance of those lost to suicide. All of September is Suicide Awareness Month. They have also asked businesses to decorate their windows in purple for the month. The group has also asked that the fees for rental of the gazebo be waived. The Board agreed to waive the fees for rental of the Courthouse Square and Gazebo.

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE** – Glenna Phelps Aurich, Wade Tyrell, Brianna McBride, Kathy Guerin, distributed the 2023 Logan County Chamber of Commerce Budget Request to the Board. Mr. Tyrell discussed some of the Chamber's projects from the past year. The Chamber's funding comes from a variety of sources, membership dues, grants, fund-raising events and city and county financial support. Funding is used to connect with, engage, activate and promote businesses within the community. Currently there are 246 businesses that are members, 217 within the City of Sterling and 29 within the County. That is about 45 members net increase over the last four years. Their 2022 Fiscal Year and Calendar Year Budget is \$147,670.

Tyrell discussed the expenses in the budget as being like most businesses, labor, taxes and IRA contributions for employees at \$98,000 operational expenses such as insurance, accounting fees, advertising, banking fees, \$14,000 per year. Rent and utilities average \$8,000-\$9,000 per year. Event expenses typically run about

\$10,000 and they net about \$25,000 revenue from the events. The Chamber is requesting \$20,000 in the year 2023 from Logan County which is double what they have been getting. Ms. Phelps Aurich was asked to describe the rural outreach program in Logan County. She has visited with all of the town Clerks of the rural communities and asked if they would like to participate. Each town or city can participate for \$130 per year and each of the businesses within that zip code can join within that town for a reduced price of \$50. Two of the towns have participated.

Glenna is retiring later this year. The Board is concerned whether the new director will keep up with the momentum of the rural businesses and will the new hire carry forward with pursuing businesses in the rural areas and will the additional funds requested will be put to good use. Mr. Tyrell noted that there were twelve good candidates. They were narrowed down to four finalists. The job has been offered to an applicant who has tentatively accepted.

There is currently an administrative assistant position that more or less has not supported the Executive Director the way it needs to be. They are planning to make it more of a marketing position as well as adding daily cold calls on Chamber members asking them how the Chamber can better support them. This would better support the Executive Director position. The applicant that they have made the offer to is currently at Morgan Community College and has some type of experience in New Mexico an organization similar to a Chamber of Commerce. She does have a great deal of community and marketing experience as well.

Commissioner Bauder noted that the county is being asked to double its contribution and asked what would the additional funds be used for. Ms. Phelps Aurich noted that a large part of the funds would assist with the salary for the executive director and the assistant director position. She intends to stay on to train the new person so that things do not fall apart.

Costs have increased in hosting events and some have fallen short this year. They hope to make that up next year. When they were looking to hire a new director, they realized they were going to fall short with their budgeted salary. Chamber benefits people in town as well as those outside of town. If the new director comes in and events don't continue to benefit businesses outside of town, it will be harder for the county to justify the funding at the increased amount. The Board is interested in seeing more Ag involvement in the Chamber. Mr. Tyrell noted that none of the major implement dealers are members of the Chamber and that hinders membership of other Ag businesses. They are owned by their hierarchy chain owners. If they could capture a few of those it might help encourage some of the other Ag businesses to also become members. Sterling Livestock has joined which helped. The Board will give the information to the Finance Officer and consider it when putting together the budget.

The meeting recessed at 9:29 a.m. and reconvened at 9:47 a.m.

**LEE WALZ** – Mr. Lee Walz met with the Board to discuss his concerns with the nation. He gave the Board a bit of his background. He grew up speaking two languages, in the beet fields of Crook, Colorado speaking German and English. He graduated from Crook High School. He showed livestock at the State Fair in 1953-1955. He then explained his military duty and achievements. He mentioned his mentors. One, Admiral Hoffmann wrote a book “Unfit for Command” on green energy and John Kerry. He brought the book with him and had several pages marked with quotes that he asked the commissioners to look at.

Mr. Walz notes that this country has a problem with John Kerry and a problem with tax collectors. There are 87,000 tax collectors coming on board and they are going to be carrying side arms. Mr. Walz is asking the

Commissioners to talk to their “contemporaries” in Colorado about making some people “uneasy”. He also said that we need to take some busloads of immigrants to some sanctuary cities like Boulder and Denver so that we can get some representation there to make sense. Commissioner Pelton suggested that Mr. Walz talk to the local Republican Party members instead of the Commissioners about this.

Mr. Walz asked the Board to stick up for America. Commissioner McBride suggested again that Mr. Walz go to his local precinct chairperson if there is one in Peetz and ask them to get involved.

**NIYOL WIND INVESTIGATION** – Chairman Pelton stated that he had received a call from Jennifer Herron of Niyol Wind. They have finished their investigation of the wind tower that fell over several months ago and would like to present the report of the investigation it to the Board in a public hearing so that it is fully transparent in a public meeting on August 30<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Pelton asked that this be placed on the August 30<sup>th</sup> agenda, the last item as the wind tower update.

**QUOTE FOR NEW SERVERS IT COMPANY** – Commissioner Bauder presented a quote for new servers for the courthouse from Complete Technology Solutions, LLC. The quote is under budget. Two of the servers will be replaced. There are currently three servers, however there is only one thing running through the third server. Everything on the three servers will be combined into two servers of 64 instead of 28. Commissioner Bauder directed the Board to page five of the handout to show how far under budget the IT budget currently is right now. Only 26% of the budget has been used for the year so far.

There has been no further talk of the generator purchase from the hospital. There has been no purchase order generated. The Board approved the purchase of the two new servers. Commissioner Bauder noted that this will be a good upgrade and will even help with the WIFI. Right now, all of the giga-bytes are coming into one place and getting diluted when they go out.

**EXHIBIT CENTER PROJECT** – Commissioner Bauder e-mailed the preliminary drawing to the Board members. She could not get it to print. She asked them to take a look at it and also asked for input for things that they would like to see in the kitchen or anywhere else and she will pass it on to Ken. The east wall is being taken out to open up the kitchen to the new addition and the kitchen will be remodeled. The kitchen will serve both the new addition and the indoor arena. The bathrooms will be moved closer for the 4-H kids. Chairman Pelton asked about drinking fountains in the corridor. The goal is to make the doors big enough to drive vehicles through them, depending on budget and cost. The Board did not have any other comments on the preliminary drawings.

**SHERIFF PICKUP INSURANCE CLAIM** – Commissioner Bauder asked if any other Board members were aware that the same Sheriff’s deputy that was responsible for the pickup that caught fire, drove a pickup into a ravine coming out of the Sheriff’s Department. He lost control and went into the water and ruined an engine because it got water in it. Jennifer just got the claim Friday and is putting it together to send in to CTSI. She will add both claims to the spreadsheet and send them to the Board.

Commissioner Bauder also witnessed the same deputy in a Sheriff’s car on Highway 14 and County Road 33 by Sage Point go down into the ditch where there was a culvert to get around somebody and smashed the front end of the car. She stated she would be amazed if it did not cause any damage to that car. This person also wrecked his own motorcycle. This is all in the course of one month. He is back at work and working in the control center for the jail.

The Board can discuss this with the Sheriff when they ask for money for cars when they meet with him on the budget. Jennifer will e-mail all claims to the Board in the future so that they are aware of them right away.

The Sheriff was given \$10,000 more in his training budget for this year.

**PUBLIC TRUSTEE BUDGET HEARING** – Chairman Pelton announced that the Public Trustee’s Budget hearing is October 7<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m.

**TREASURER’S LIENS** – Chairman Pelton asked the Board members if they had seen the tax liens for the Treasurer’s Office.

**TIENNA PRICE PROPERTY CLEANUP** – Commissioner McBride will meet with Larry Price tomorrow. He feels that there is some progress being made.

**SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT/JAIL SALARIES** - Debbie Unrein and Michelle Hoff met with the Board. Commissioner McBride talked to Diana this morning, this could go into effect for the August 29<sup>th</sup> payroll. Commissioner McBride had Debbie redo the pay schedule but it really bumped up some people’s salaries. Debbie explained that the Sheriff wants to put everyone at midpoint no matter where they are in their tenure. He said he has discussed this with all of the employees and they are OK with the changes. There are a few exceptions, but the spreadsheet Debbie provided has explained it.

The number on the spreadsheet is fully staffed, however the Sheriff has never been fully staffed and it has never been as bad as it is right now. This is the number that will be used during budgeting for next year. The Sheriff’s are trying to increase the pay scale to attract more employees to be able to retain the staff they have and to attract new staff. The comparisons to Morgan County and Sterling are better but still do not beat their salaries.

The jail staff is a very young staff with not a lot of tenured people. Michelle Hoff of the HR department wanted to know how the plan will affect the minimum and the maximum salaries. This will be the new minimum and if raises are given at 2.5% for COLA and another 2.5% or other raise is added it will be figured in. The salary scale will require more discussion.

The Board approved the increase in salaries for the Sheriff’s Department unanimously.

Morgan County recently went through an overhaul of their salary scale of this same magnitude. They were close to sending their prisoners to Washington County because they were so short-staffed.

**BUDGET MEETINGS** - The Board agreed to begin budget meetings on Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. The Board will hold budget meetings weekly except October 4<sup>th</sup> and October 25<sup>th</sup>.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:36a.m.